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RHYMES

OF AN
AMATEUR
POET



BY
HAROLD R. PARSONS





Rhymes of an Amateur Poet

By HAROLD R. PARSONS

Rhymes are the right of any man
To write, to read or to spurn;
If you write them you know,
If you read maybe so,
If you spurn them
It's your right to burn them.

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APOLOGIES

I would like to elucidate one important fact concerning this publication. These verses were not written to inflame the emotion of the sentimentalist, to agree with the optimist, gibe the pessimist nor to propound the principles of psychology. They were just written. If they afford a very little pleasure the author will consider himself handsomely rewarded for his humble efforts.

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude, the assistance of Edward Gage, who suggested the ideas for two of the verses in this collection.

—THE AUTHOR.

With brotherly affection and for
kind assistance in one way and
another I dedicate these rhymes to

CLARENCE H. HILL

THE SPOON OF TIN.

A baby was born with a spoon in his mouth
 And the spoon was made of tin.
 When he grew to young manhood,
 The rocks in his path
 Made him swear there were none like him.
 He lived in fear of the coming day;
 He forgot that his mother had taught him to pray;
 He lost track of the place where contentment is found;
 He could not even utter a pleasant sound;
 He forgot the dear arms mother cuddled him in,
 And all for the reason, his spoon was of tin.

* * *

AS the story goes, he stumbled on
 In a world where foul winds had blown;
 Until one day, though it may seem a tale,
 His eye caught a gleam from behind a stone.
 He rushed to the spot; he fell on his knees;
 His face was green with greed.
 Then he selfishly clutched his find to his breast,
 For that was the fellow's breed.
 'Twas a spoon he'd found lying there on the ground,
 But this spoon was made of gold.
 He laughed, he wept, he danced with glee,
 For the man had found what he sought, you see.
 The spoon of tin had a rancid taste,
 While the one of gold was sweet;
 So he threw his old tin spoon away
 And crushed it under his feet.

THE lust for gold had a death-like hold
 On this man with a taste for spoons.
 He gripped the gold in his greedy teeth
 And crunched for a month of moons,
 'Till soon it was bent and twisted
 And punctured with many holes.
 Now he can't understand, perhaps never will,
 Why he failed so close to his goal.
 Yet the fact remains, he ruined his spoon,
 He threw it away in disgust.
 Now he wanders again as he did at the start
 Denouncing his God unjust.

* * *

YEARS have elapsed and the man has passed
 Through a practical hell on earth.
 The trail has been long, the idea wrong;
 They charged him a terrible prices for his birth.
 There he goes, still stumbling on
 Through the valley of never-get-there;
 When suddenly out of the derelict's throat
 Comes a shout of the wildest joy—
 There on the ground, where he'd thrown it away,
 Lay his childhood's unwelcome toy.
 He snatched it up and thrust between
 His parched and swollen lips.
 It soothed his soul, it cleared his brain,
 All thought of the golden spoon was slain.

* * *

HE stands at the gate of contentment now
 And though he is haggard and thin,
 He will tell you a spoon of gold doesn't taste—
 So sweet as a spoon of tin.

AN OLD GAME

A pretty girl,
A handsome chap,
Some one to introduce them.

* * *

SWEET dreams of her,
Fond dreams of him,
For the rest no need induce them.

* * *

HE calls twice weekly,
Then three times,
Now four, five, six and seven.
He leaves at nine,
And later ten,
Then finally eleven.
His appetite forsakes him;
His clubs don't fascinate;
For friends no need,
With love sick seed
He daily loses weight.

* * *

SHE much the same
Since first he came
Is counting out the hours;
'Till her, to tell,
Rings loud the bell,
Outside the door he towers.

A laughing moon,
 A dainty waist,
 An arm, two pair of lips.
 First one and then the other
 Of love's sweet nectar sips.

* * *

A little ring that sparkles
 In a pretty plush lined box;
 A question and an answer,
 Then the great, big, wide world rocks.

* * *

A nervous chat with father,
 A reddish blush or two;
 If his answer is affirmative,
 You have no more to do.

* * *

WILD excitement round her house,
 A trousseau they're preparing.
 In the fellow's domicile,
 Some such thing worth comparing.

* * *

A minister, a Good Book,
 A best man and a band.
 A band that plays a silent tune,
 The loudest in the land.
 A solemn vow, two promises,
 A kiss, a lot of rice,
 A honeymoon, its over —
 Now doesn't it sound nice? ? ? ? ?

THE OCEAN OF LIFE.

THERE is an old, old vessel,
Sails an ancient sea,
With an aged skipper
Steering you and me.
The time drags on
And the port seems far,
Soon is spirit gone,
Hope a broken spar;
And it all takes place,
This endless race,
On the course of life's Ambition.

ON the swirling, whirling, deceiving
Ocean of life, we often blunder,
While we're paling, failing, sailing
Through strife, we stop to wonder.
But the reason is plain;
The ship is too vast;
So many lives cannot cling to one mast.
If each one were swimming,
And striving to live
Without a reliance in what others give,
There would be no more drowning
In waters of strife,
But a smooth sailing trip on the Ocean of Life.

A CALLER.

DOOR bell started ringin',
Filled us with dismay.
Father put his shoes on,
An' layed his pipe away.

SISTER got a whisk broom
And dusted off a chair.
Aunt Ann at a mirror
Started fixin' up her hair.

I sat still and watched 'em,
An' never said a word,
I was that excited
I never could've stirred.

THEY folded up the papers,
An' dusted pictures, too.
They acted kind of nervous,
Like folks what's movin' do.

THE whole bunch got most tired to death,
A runnin' in an' out.
An' honest injun, I don't know
Just what 'twas all about.

THEN when they got all ready,
And everything was straight,
The door bell ringin' on and on,
Most seven times or eight.

SISTER tangoes to the door,
An' I'm a laughin' still,
'Cause it wasn't anybody
But a feller with a bill.

THE SCARLET TRAIL.

"HA, ha," croaked the Devil,
"I've one more soul
To guide through
The Scarlet Trail;
A lad this time,
A sweet boy, too."
He chuckled and wagged his tail.

"LET me see," he sighed,
"If I cannot find
Some new sights
Here to show."
Then he led the lad
To a place, where he knew
Was a dangerous undertow.

"FIRST I'll introduce him," said he,
"To my old friend Cigarette;
A fellow he'll find
The best in the land,
Who will stick by him
Through thick and thin,
Ready to lend a hand."

“NEXT, with old friend Barleycorn
I'll make the lad acquainted;
He is always cool
And strong of will,
He is good and bad,
Yet he makes you gay
And liberal too, when he sends his bill.”

“NOW for a woman,
He must see her.
I'll show her
In splendor grand;
For a woman's touch
Means everything
With an innocent lad in hand.”

“I'LL choose a girl
Who has been the rounds;
I know a beautiful lass,
One of my pupils she is.
She will lure him on
'Till his mind is gone;
She will teach him how to love.”

THE Devil sat down
And held his sides,
He gurgled and laughed and roared,
With merriment bubbled o'er;
Then remembered the work
He never could shirk;
He picked himself up off the floor.

"IT'S all so simple,
The way they fall.
They never stop for thought;
Just shut their eyes
And plunge ahead,
'Till every inch
Of their soul is dead."

"NOW for a trip
To the music halls
Of vivid disrepute;
Some more of the ugly game.
Here of passion the boy shall learn,
And more of life shall glean;
See, he's coming nearer
To utter despair and shame."

“YOU think I am cruel,
 But I’m not, I vow;
 My interests all lie above;
 I love the world,
 But my work is teaching
 That evils exist,
 And examples must be unfurled.”

“SO I’ll rob him of pride;
 I’ll steal his soul;
 I’ll worry him on
 To the end of time.
 At last I’ll drive him relentlessly
 To the hottest regions
 Of Satan’s clime.”

THEN the Devil stood up;
 He yawned and stretched
 And laughed and sang
 And danced from side to side;
 Then he looked on his work
 With sparkling eyes,
 As he said with evident pride—

“MY work is done,
 He is started now;
 There is nothing more,
 I have set his sail.
 He’ll go on and on,
 And he’ll never know
 That he’s treading the Scarlet Trail.”

HE SUFFERS.

Dedicated sympathetically to the average lad with
his first pair of long trousers.

I would I were a willow,
Waving in her backyard;
Though better still in bread she eats,
I would I were the lard.
I would I were the hairpins
That hold her lovely hair;
Though better still I would I were
The object of her stare.
I would I were the hat pins
That fasten her pretty hat;
Yet better still I would I were
The door key to her flat.
I would I were the garments
That cling to her like glue.
In other words, I'd like to stick around her;
Wouldn't you?

LOVE'S MEMORY.

I dreamed a most wonderful dream last night,
 Of a girl whom I loved years ago.
 It seemed as though we were sweethearts again,
 In our mountains where sweet breezes blow.
 I thought we were strolling through beautiful fields,
 And again by a babbling brook,
 Through wonderful gardens we wandered on,
 'Twas just like the love in a story book.

But 'twas only a dream,
 No matter how sweet,
 No matter how sad I might be.
 My one dearest friend
 Gave my heart it's death rend,
 When he stole my dear loved one from me.

I could hardly believe that it was the dear girl,
 'Till she mentioned sweet mem'ries of yore,
 Of beautiful hours in rose covered bowers,
 And our walks on the pebbly shore.
 She married the man for the money he had;
 Her life was a horrible dream.
 I thought that death's gate was her false lover's fate,
 That her love would come drifting to me.

But 'twas only a dream,
 No matter how sweet,
 No matter how sad I might be.
 My one dearest friend
 Gave my heart it's death rend,
 When he stole my dear loved one from me.

INSPIRATION.

THE morning sun shone golden,
O'er the distant hills of green.
The birds were singing in the trees;
A most delightful scene.

THE sunrise told a story
Of a newly budding world;
The coming of another day,
The robes of night unfurled.

NO poet could describe the hills,
In all their stately beauty;
A bit of Nature's handiwork;
To God above—her duty.

THE birds in all their glory,
As they flit from limb to limb,
Would fill a weary soul with joy
And ever-lasting vim.

A rippling stream falls bubbling,
O'er the rocks beside the road;
Such a picture, let me tell you,
Lifts an awfully heavy load.

A dream of truth quite golden,
Void of mock or imitation;
A gift of God Almighty,
Aye, His children's INSPIRATION.

TWO LITTLE LOVERS.

TWO little lovers sit gazing,
As two little lovers will do,
With two little smiles on their faces;
The way it once happened to you.

THEIR minds are at peace with the world;
Their souls are in perfect commune;
Their silence has many big things to say,
As they sit through the long afternoon.

HER eyes are like stars in the heavens,
Her hair like the purest of gold,
Her teeth are a beautiful pearly white,
Her nose like the Grecian of old.

IN truth, she's the fairest of damsels,
Quite worthy the love of a king.
Her figure reminds one of delicate leaves
Swaying in breezes of Spring.

YOU can see at a glance what a lovely wife
This beautiful girl would make;
And the fellow sat still, as though in a sleep
From which he would never awake.

THESE two are the sort who always agree,
Who never have angry words,
Who never become a bit jealous
Or misrepresent what they've heard.

IN short, they're an ideal couple,
The "one in ten thousand" brand,
Their souls are alike and that is enough;
Between them they understand.

AND though they are not in a moonlit park,
With no one for miles around,
They sit there the same silent lovers,
They make not the slightest sound.

THEY sit in a little room back of a store,
Where they work when they don't sit staring;
Of noise and excitement around them,
Apparently never caring.

LOOK, you can almost see them move,
About to embrace one another.
Their cheeks are aflush with a tint of pink;
No doubt they love each other.

NOW right in the midst of their dreams of love,
Without any warning whatever,
A man breaks in on their reverie,
With intent their communion to sever.

AND just at the happiest moment,
The divinest hour of their day,
They are dragged from the cloakhouse storeroom
And thrust into a window display.

NEWSIE PHILOSOPHY.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Picture yourself peering into 'a narrow, not altogether tidy, back alley. Picture an urchin about ten years of age seated on a broken barrel, reading a torn paper covered volume with rigid industry. Imagine, if you can, that you have been following his career for five years or more. With the information you possess as a result of this imaginary acquaintance, you will know that he has made what there is of his existence with the strength of his two arms; that he never had a father to remember, and that since old enough to appreciate a mother, he has been without her loving tenderness. You have likely surmised by now that his association with curbstome life has quickened his wits. You are probably familiar with his mode of speech, unless you have never ventured far enough into the street to have been approached for the sale of the latest news. Then picture a comrade entering the alley to find his friend absorbed in print. This older boy, by perhaps two or three years, considers himself a learned old philosopher beside his younger companion. Sit with me for a few moments on a row of kegs in a narrow alley and listen to the ensuing conversation.

The older boy, happily.

Hello, Chimmie.

The Younger, peevisly.

Hello, Sid.

The older, happily.

Wot 'er yuh doin'?

The younger, aggravated.

Aw, readin' a bit.

The older, happily.

Wot er' yuh readin'? Give us a tip.

The younger, angrily.

Aw, sumpin' abot a guy wid da pip.

Beat it away an' lemme alone,

Yur alwus chewin' a rag ur a bone.

The older, disgruntled.

Well, yuh needin get sore wid me, yuh grouch,
I'll give yuh a kick in yur mail pouch.

The younger, with bravado.

Say, don't pick no scrap wid me, simp guy;
 Dig out yur ears an' listen why;
 I'm readin', see, improvin' me nut;
 Dat's wat you oughta be doin', yuh mut.
 Say, you an' me has been pals a long while,
 I been tryin' to slip yuh me style.
 We been loafin' around an' sleepin' fer years,
 Spendin' dough fer smokin' an' beers.
 Now listen to me wid yur vacooom dome;
 Did yuh ever hear of this Lingkun guy,
 Wot studied an' read 'till he wore out his eye?
 Well, he was a poor kid like me an' you,
 But he didn' loaf. No, wot did he do?
 He laid on da ground wid a candle, dats all,
 He never come tru like you, wid a stall,
 Dat he did know sumpin' he didn' know;
 He woiked wid his dome 'till he loined it, bo.
 An' wot did dey do, de guys all around?
 Dey made 'im dere chief, dere importenest houn'.
 An' wot did he do? Did he loaf an' stall?
 He got up wid de whole bunch aroun' in da hall,
 An' tole 'em to fight fer da niggars, dats all.
 Jes' grab dere guns, git out an' scrap,
 Shoot up da country, change da map.
 An' den he went out from town to town,
 Lettin' 'em all know wid a big loud soun',
 Dat niggars was free, dere was no more slaves;
 Believe me, bo, dat guy was brave.

The older boy, counselling.

Wid lots a head woik, listen to me,
 Dere was two gangs fightin'; wasn' dere two?
 Da soudern gang an' de norder blue?
 Now look a here, Chimmie, don' kid wid me,
 'Cause I been readin' a bit me self, see.
 An' I got a hunch on dis hist'ry stuff
 Wot's got yurs frazzled an' billed a bluff.
 I s'pose yuh forgot dis Washinton guy,
 Wid da trutful tongue an' da weder eye.
 Yuh see de edecation I got, well, bo,
 Don't start preachin' 'till yuh know wot yuh know.
 An' yuh never finished dis Lingkun yarn.
 Wot did he do when de fightin' was done?
 I s'pose he went out an' come home wid a bun
 To celebrate, or mebe his chest
 Was trun in de air
 To make 'im important
 Or trow 'em a scare? Naw, he didn'.
 Now listen to me, I'll show yuh wot I know
 Dat yuh don' know; gee, yur a regular simp
 Wid dis lernin' stuff, an' den yuh come handin'
 Me yer guff. I'll tell yuh wot dis guy
 Pulled off; he clears his throat
 An' pulls a cough, an' he says:
 Brudders and sisters of dis great nation,
 To help remember dat we're a square gang,
 We'll stick up a tombstone fer da fightin' gang.
 Da very next day dey started a tower—
 Dat Bunker Hill monument t'ing,
 An' dey woiked every hour 'till dey had it done,

Dat's wot dey did. Den dey put up a sign
 On a big sheet of brass, wot said, "Dis fer slaves,"
 An' "Keep off da grass." Yuh t'ink yur wise
 Wid dis hist'ry stuff. Shocks, yur full
 A hot air an' bluff. Yur one of dese heimers
 Wot knows de woild. If de trut was known
 Yur brains is soiled. W'en ever yur tinkin'
 Dat yuh know it all, some guy wot don' talk, bo,
 'll slip yuh a fall. Jes' git de idea
 Dat yur here wid a crowd,
 W'en odders are wid yuh, don' holler so loud.
 They leave the alley, arm in arm, the best of friends.

MOTHER, GOD BLESS YOUR HEART.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

A foolish man, as many men are, accosted a party of club members who found him interesting enough to take him with them. He was ragged, soiled, and stained with drink; still he had a soul. Every man has a soul. Sometimes it is smothered, sometimes it awakens as it did in this man. The following is what the man related as he sat before the fire among these men who pitied him:

I suppose I do look a drunken sot,
 A down an' outer———a bum;
 Yes, I know I do, as well as you,
 The reason?———sure, it's rum.
 But it ain't because I'm bad clean through,
 There's some good in me yet;
 That's why I want to tell you my tale
 Of a life that's been wrong, you can bet.
 (A slight pause.)
 I was blessed by a mother, the best in the world,
 None any better could live.
 What she did for me was all could be done
 An' she gave to me all she could give.
 Why, say, in them days I was happy and young
 An' strong, the same as you.
 There wasn't a thing under God's blue sky
 For that mother, I wouldn't do.
 (A slight pause as tears fill his eyes.)
 Then she died, pals, (pause) died and left me
 At a time when I needed her most.
 (He rubs his eyes, gazing vaguely into space.)
 Look!———there she is now,
 A kind of a hazy ghost. (pause) Humph! (pause)
 I grew to be twenty-two, an' I met a girl,

As sweet as a buddin' rose.
 Say, pals, I never in all my life—
 Seen such wonderful eyes as those.
 Her glance seemed to come right from her soul
 An' it went deep down to mine.
 One day she promised to be my wife
 Humm—then my sun began to shine.
 We married an' lived quite happy awhile,
 Me and my wife and her pretty smile.
 We never had much, we was moderate fixed,
 But we did have a right happy home,
 (His smile at this sweet memory suddenly changes to
 an expression of grief)
 'Till one day the firm sent me north on a trip,
 So I had to leave her alone.
 'Twas only a month I had to be gone,
 I promised to write every day;
 I kissed her and left her and hurried along.
 (A lump of memory chokes him. He gasps for breath.)
 The rest of it's hard to say. (pause)
 I'm all choked up, my mouth is parched,
 Haven't got a small drink to spare?
 (They hand him a drink to quench his thirst. With
 a swallow it disappears.)
 Thanks, pal, that's good of you sure,
 I'll repay you someday, that's fair.
 (He wipes his lips on his coat sleeve.)
 Now I'll finish my tale, there ain't much more,
 Then you can sit an' think—
 (They hand him a second glass, the contents of which
 follow the first with a like rapidity.)

Thanks, pal, I didn't expect you to
 Bring me another drink.
 (Again he wipes his lips on his coat sleeve.)
 Well, I wrote to her regular every day
 But narry an answer came.
 (In retrospective soliloquy.)
 I've often wondered if she was wrong,
 Or if I was the one to blame.
 (He speaks faster.)
 It worried me, pals, I couldn't sleep,
 So I started direct for home.
 Arriving there I found her gone,
 The place was cold and alone.
 I hunted and searched with never a sign,
 Save a note that I've always kept. (pause)
 Since that day, believe me or not,
 There ain't been a night I've slept. (pause)
 Maybe you'd like to hear the note,
 (He takes a letter from his inner pocket. It is old,
 torn and dirty, the result of repeated reading.)
 I'll read it as part of my tale.
 It struck me dumb, it made me sick.
 That was the wind that shattered my sail.
 (He takes the letter from the envelope and reads.)
 Dear Tom, try not to feel bad,
 I'm sorry it had to come.
 I know I'm not worthy of even a thought,
 I know I'd not get it from some.
 I've tried to reconcile myself
 To our little mean existence,
 But I can't, Tom, I simply can't,
 Though I've tried with fierce persistence.

I've been offered a life full of wonderful things,
 O, I know I'm weak to give way,
 But there's no use crying, it's all done now.
 Good-bye Tom, good luck 'till the end.
 (A sob of emotion convulses his body.)
 My God! Did you hear?
 She left me like that, with never another word;
 That's years ago and since that day,
 Not a thing of the girl have I heard.
 It drove me mad with sorrow. (pause)
 'Twas then I started drinking
 To sort of drown my remorse;
 Now there's only one thing left to do,
 Go on and follow the course.
 (With vehemence.)
 Good God! what a woman can do to a man,
 When she sets herself up to do it;
 And she's the one who soon forgets,
 While the man, poor fool, lives to rue it.
 I've tried to brace up more than once in the years,
 Thinking perhaps she'd come back.
 (His eyes are aflame with hatred.)
 The thief who stole her away? Curse him!
 I'd like to tear him limb from limb. (pause)
 Nobody wants me, I'm broken,
 I'm only a wreck of a tramp;
 The only place I'm welcome
 Is out in the cold and the damp. (pause)
 (Fiercely) Sometimes I wish I had the nerve
 To end it all with a stroke;
 (Brokenly) But I haven't, she left me a broken coward.

I've got to live and suffer and poke
 Around 'till the end of time.
 (He makes a pause as though listening.)
 What's that? (pause) What's that I heard you say?
 My mother?—God, I wish she was here.
 She'd know a way to fix it all,
 She'd find a way out, never fear.
 (He places his hand to his ear as though listening to an
 inner voice.)
 I seem to hear voices talking low,
 From away inside they come—
 Listen, for God's sake, listen!
 Can't you hear?
 It's her!—It's my mother's voice. (pause)
 She wants me to make a clean start.
 I'll bet she's praying for me right now.
 Sure, I'll make a new fight for your sake, Mother,
 God bless your heart.

THE DRAMA OF '85.

MANY a man is still alive
Who remembers the drama of '85,
The blood thirsty melo',
That straightened your hair
And dilated your eyes
With a horrified stare.

10, 20 or 30 secured you a seat,
Ten clumsy patrons climbed over your feet.
Four acts of murder;
One act of remorse;
A kiss and a fight
Was the general course.

RECALL, if you can, a heroine sweet,
With an innocent smile
From her head to her feet.
Her part was to anger the villain and more;
The hero must love her
As none loved before.

PICTURE the hero, a wonderful chap,
He cleans the cast
With a single slap.
He conquers the villain and weds the girl
With the wonderful eyes
And the golden curl.

NOW for the villain with vicious beard,
And a fire in his eyes
That is much to be feared.
With his posse of thugs he hastens along,
He does all he can
To set everything wrong.

ACT one is a scene representing a street;
The sun is on high, terrific the heat;
The villain sneaks on;
The hero stands nigh;
He sees all that happens,
But utters no cry.

NEXT the old mill, the wheel running fast.
In this act they kill
More than half the cast.
Our hero is tied in a row boat secure
And dragged toward the mill wheel
To death that is sure.

BUT the heroine happens to be near the spot.
She severs the rope
With a bread knife she's got.
The hero is rescued, a very close shave;
Then he hurries his gang
To the cutthroats' cave.

THEY see him approach, gun fighting ensues ;
Now the hero unscathed
Reaches home with the news
That eleven are dying and seven are dead,
But none of his own crowd
Tasted of lead.

THE villain, however, slight wound in his arm,
Has escaped to the loft
Of Seth Anderson's barn.
The next is the last, all worry is o'er ;
The whole cast is happy,
Nobody is sore.

A wedding arranged, a dime novel fad,
The hero and heroine blessed by her dad.
Then a knock at the door—
A deep silence falls ;
The door is flung open,
A crash in the hall.

THE man is picked up
From the floor where he lies.
'Tis the villain wants mercy
"Ere death comes," he sighs.
The hero repents, the heroine too.
Do they forgive him? They certainly do.

NOW all feel much better,
It ends as it should.
The villain will live, they are glad that he could.
The audience leaves, thirty cents to the bad,
Sore at themselves
For feeling so sad.

THE actors make haste
To a ham and egg joint,
With Java and snails their stomachs annoint.
Then up to their rooms awaiting next night,
When back to the show house
To murder and fight.

* * *





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